

Seattle Waterfront Partners Group

Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2005

Waterfront Partners Group Members

Sally	Bagshaw	Allied Arts
Angela	Belbeck	Seattle Board of Parks Commissioners
Sydney	Dobson	Seattle Architectural Foundation
Lorna	Jordan	Lorna Jordan Studio
Tim	King	WA State Ferries/Colman Dock
Flo	Lentz	Historic Preservation
Ralph	Pease	Argosy Cruises
Heather	Trim	People for Puget Sound
Judith	Whetzel	Triangle property owners
David	Yeaworth	Allied Arts

Guests

Tara	Ballentine	University of Washington
Heidi	Curtiss	University of Washington
Lance	Farber	Citizen
Joe	Follansbee	AKCHO
Gretchen	Hund	UW/Battelle
Kristy	Laing	WSDOT
Meriwether	Wilson	University of Washington

City Staff

Steve	Pearce	SDOT
Richard	Gelb	OSE
John	Arneson	SDOT
Joyce	Kling	SDOT
Layne	Cubell	DPD
David	Graves	DPR
Ann	Sutphin	SDOT
Kathy	Lueckert	DPD
John	Rahaim	DPD
Guillermo	Romano	DPD
Robert	Scully	DPD
Paul	Chasan	DPD

Introductions

- John Rahaim asked WPG to review the WPG member list that was recently circulated via email and confirm its accuracy. Please review that we are using the correct names for WPG members and their alternates.
- A few meetings ago, there was some discussion about rescheduling WPG meetings from the Friday afternoon timeslot. We decided to keep the same time due to staff schedules as well as a lack of consensus among WPG members over a better meeting time.

Review Meeting Minutes from September 9th

There were no comments on the minutes from last month's meeting

Shoreline & Aquatic Habitat Section of Concept Plan

Richard Gelb, a member of the City's ecology team who works in the Office of Sustainability & Environment, gave a presentation on the City's work regarding the role of ecology and waterfront planning to date.

Notes of interest from the discussion:

- 1. Anyone interested in participating in an Ecology Subcommittee should get in contact with Heather Trim.*
 - 2. The city will email meeting agendas before WPG meetings so WPG members can comment on and influence the content of the meeting agenda.*
- The City's ecology team is an interdepartmental group made up of staff from SDOT, DPD, SPU, Office of Sustainability and Environment, and Parks. They regularly bring in people from the Port, local NGO's and the UW program on the environment.
 - Their role is to review and evaluate scientific research to determine the current best practice and then develop design guidelines for implementation.
 - At this time the ecology team is not ready to recommend specific design recommendations and interventions.
 - They are now identifying the most salient opportunities for redevelopment. These include:
 - Environmental issues such as light, bathymetry, continuity,
 - Operational impacts due to propeller wash and contamination from boats
 - The degree that built structures such as pilings and the sea wall can support habitat
 - The role that vegetation—both aquatic and terrestrial—can play in ameliorating salmon habitat.
 - The team has now started the process of editing/rewriting the Shoreline and Aquatic Habitat section of the draft concept plan (pp 17-19 on the draft circulated to WPG members)

Discussion

Question: Are the City ecology team's ideas independent from one another or coordinated?

Answer: There are interrelationships. At this point in the process, the question is: What are the aspects of development that can contribute to restorative function on the waterfront? The next step is to learn about specific measures and the degree that these measures will contribute to ecological function. The team hopes to get to the point where they can evaluate the difference between different measures.

Comment: There is disconnect in the process between the UW studio and the City staff's process. S. Bagshaw feels it would be helpful to have some kind of chart/matrix/linear graph that illustrates the various groups who are involved in waterfront planning in the city. The document would include official City processes as well as those done by advocacy groups, NGO's and the University. Such a document would be helpful for people seeking to understand the relationships between the groups. It would also be

useful to document public interest and public involvement at future presentations to City Council.

Note: The comment referred to a UW spring studio class that looked at ecological issues around the waterfront and sought to explore design concepts that “push the envelope.”

Comment: H.Trim requested an environmental working group led by WPG members to direct City efforts on ecology planning along the waterfront.

Response: John Rahaim asked members about the appropriateness of the WPG taking on such a role as the WPG is currently structured as an advisory group.

This plan is intended to be a High Level policy document. The Plan is not intended to address specifics

- **Response:** This plan does not yet include high-level policy recommendations about ecology
- **Comment (R. Gelb):** High-level content will be included in the next version of the plan

The City is limited in its ability to staff / coordinate such a group. The sub-committee will need to handle its own logistics

Resolution: People who want to have an environmental group should get in touch with Heather Trim. They can then have a meeting to determine what the sub-committee’s role should be and then report back to the WPG as a sub-committee at a later date.

Request: Can the City email a pre-meeting agenda so WPG members can add stuff to it before the meeting?

Response: Yes.

Draft Waterfront Concept Plan Part 2

John Rahaim led a discussion where WPG members were able to comment on the City’s Draft Waterfront Concept Plan. The discussion will be continued at the next WPG meeting. The WPG had time to discuss the first four chapters of the plan.

Notes of interest from the discussion:

1. *Steve Pearce from SDOT explained (in detail) why the City prefers a streetcar alignment along Alaskan Way rather than Western Ave.*

A. Upland Sustainable Design

Comment: Stormwater treatment is not mentioned in the text but it is implied in the drawings. The text should include copy about treating stormwater.

Comment: The reuse of existing building and structures is a recognized as a sustainable practice. It should be included in the plan.

Comment: Someone from SPU should elaborate on the state of the city's changing codes related to stormwater runoff. There is a difference between runoff from buildings to runoff from streets.

Question: Will the group make recommendations on policy conflicts?

Reply (John Rahaim): Yes. If the group is going to become an action committee, this would be a different role for the WPG than had originally been intended and would accordingly require further discussion.

B. Pedestrian Connections:

Comment: Lack of discussion about obesity and public health. We should encourage people to walk downtown.

Comment: No mention of the disabled. There should be a bullet highlighting facilities for people with disabilities.

Comment: The way the streets are categorized on the map (primary pedestrian connections and secondary pedestrian connections) unintentionally implies a hierarchy. The categories should be changed (for example, change Primary Historic)

Comment: Wayfinding: Create a legible waterfront.

Comment: On the Pedestrian Connections Map, draw the arrows to the ends of the piers.

Comment: On the Pedestrian Connections Map, show a lid over the tunnel portal (to the south)

Comment: Show a Battery St. lid extension in the plan. If we show it, it is more likely to be built.

Comment: Extend the purple pedestrian line around the piers.

Comment: It may be possible to integrate open space into the maps.

Comment: there should be a separate running path from the strolling path on the shoreline.

This led to some discussion over the merits of a separate running path over an integrated pedestrian space. The topic, it was pointed out, should be included in a 'Public Realm Plan' for the waterfront.

C. Transit & Vehicular Connections

Comment: Nothing in this section is unique to the waterfront except water taxi/mosquito fleet and maybe the streetcar

Comment: Water taxi is a stronger statement than passenger-only ferry

Comment: Leave language open for further service without specifying what exactly that service will be. Let the market determine it.

Comment: Given the financial situation, what are the hurdles to water taxi? Permits? Docking stations? What impact does it have on the environment?

Comment: Look for coordination between public and private sectors on boat transit.

Comment: Make the street car stand out more in the plan.

Comment: As traffic increases, Broad St. will be difficult to cross.

The increasing number of trains will further exacerbate the situation. Need strong language about the conflict at Broad St.

D. Alaskan Way Surface St.

The comments below refer to the Alaskan Way Surface St. recommendations found on page 52 of the handout.

Comment: There are issues with the street car and the loading/unloading of cruise ships.

- Can the streetcar get through, especially as congestion or streetcar service increases in the corridor?
- Is there a different way to load/unload the cruise ships? E.G., some kind of different technology?

Comment: Allied Arts wants to move the streetcar to Western Ave. They believe it will connect neighborhoods and the Olympic Sculpture Park.

This led to a long and detailed presentation by Steve Pearce of SDOT explaining the City's reasoning for its preferred streetcar alignment along Alaskan Way.

Response (Steve Pearce): SDOT prefers a streetcar alignment on Alaskan Way

- Streetcar provides great access to waterfront with about 1,000,000 people per year at 10 min. headways in the summer
- One of the few activity drivers.
- Modern street cars will be used.
- Buses on waterfront in the past were not effective
- Rails are historic on the waterfront

- If you moved the streetcar, you would need to get all the stakeholders to buy into it (Metro, waterfront businesses who've paid for it, etc...) these are high political thresholds to cross.
- The streetcar on Alaskan Way is less costly since construction will already be occurring there. Placing the streetcar on Western Ave., on the other hand, would cost more since it will be a separate project. We will not be able to use Viaduct money and it will serve a different market. Western Ave. also needs serious structural work and there are likely to be unknown utilities from the past along Western that, once discovered, will add to the cost of the project
- SDOT is not opposed to exploring future uphill streetcar lines. SDOT argues that 1st Ave. would make a great streetcar route. In the long run, it would be beneficial to have both.
- Splitting the lines (having northbound streetcars run on Western Ave. and southbound streetcars along Alaskan way). From the transit perspective, it's better to have both lines on the same street especially when one factors in the grade change between Alaskan Way and Western Ave.
- We don't save a lot of space by removing the streetcar from the median since it will also be used for left turn pockets.

Comment: The left turn pocket median is not well articulated in the graphics.

Response: The median is 14' wide. The median is for car movements.

Comment: This raises the difficult issue of whether or not the median is good for pedestrians or not.

Comment: The streetcar adds character to the waterfront during the winter months.

Comment: It provides access and mobility along the waterfront.

Comment: Mobility and connectivity are separate issues. What are the different functions that streetcars can achieve?

Comment (John Rahaim): Staff has studied this issue thoroughly and is comfortable recommending as such. That said we should look for ways to address the connectivity and mobility issues raised today.

Adjourn

John Rahaim asked WPG members to please review the Potential Regulatory Changes chapter on page 39 in the Draft Waterfront Concept Plan handout. There was a conversation about a request by a WPG member who wanted to discuss: art, cultural issues, the fire station and the aquarium instead.

This lead to concerns that we are revisiting old issues and at this point, city staff needs feedback on specific items if they are to move the plan forward. At this high-level phase, art and culture can be addressed in a position statement.

Next time the group will discuss 2-3 key topics (including art and culture). We can also discuss what level of detail is appropriate for this level of plan.

John Rahaim stressed that for political reasons, we need to have closure with this phase of the plan.